



## Annika Romeyn returns to nature

Combining watercolour, drawing and printmaking, Kamberri/Canberra-based artist Annika Romeyn creates imposing images that reflect the beauty and awe she feels when surrounded by the natural environment.

In Romeyn's latest series of monotype prints, the Mutawintji National Park (located in the far west region of New South Wales) serves as inspiration. In 2023, Romeyn spent time camping and hiking there, observing the nuances of the changing landscape firsthand. "Arriving after an exceptional period of rain, I followed the dry creek-bed in and back, tracing a string of small pools to a larger waterhole, where the gorge narrowed and steepened," she says. "I walked between river red gums draped with debris from past floods and looked up towards resilient black cypress pines with their roots tapped into cracks."

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Filled with rock formations, native wildlife and ancient rock art, the Mutawintji National Park is the traditional home of the Pantjikal, Wanyuparku, Wilyakali and Malyangapa people. While she was on site, Romeyn spent time with Wiimpatja, the Traditional Owners and Custodians, walking together and learning about Mutawintji and the environmental challenges it faces. "Hearing about the scarcity and value of water in the region made the experience all the more impactful and contemplative," says Romeyn. "For me, walking, drawing and re-visiting, are all ways to begin a meaningful engagement with place."

**"Working with limited colour has been a way to imbue my work with a sense of place and memory, while my choice of colour is often emotive and symbolic. I always knew the semi-arid environment of Mutawintji National Park would require its own palette, distinct from any work I'd made before."**

During this trip, Old Mutawintji Gorge became a favoured spot to return to, and it informs Romeyn's new body of work. Once back in her studio, Romeyn recreated the Mutawintji landscape from memory—a method she frequently employs to capture the feeling and emotion of a place rather than an exact physical representation. "Considering Mutawintji is some 1000kms from my studio, drawing and printmaking became a way to return or enter back into a memory of place," Romeyn explains. Elements of nature—trees, undergrowth, and waterways—are drawn in intricate detail, contrasting with the gestural strokes of the watercolours Romeyn uses as backgrounds. The final, printed result of this process takes on a ghostly appearance, as though multiple images are fading in and out of view.

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► Annika Romeyn, *Looking In (Old Mutawintji Gorge)* 2024, watercolour monotype on paper, 76cm x 112cm, (fra...

Colour is a deeply important aspect of Romeyn's work, and she will often produce an entire series of prints dedicated to a single colour. Previous works like her *Endurance* series focused on blue, while the *Mutawintji* series is washed in shades of red. "For me, red has a sense of interiority that relates to the feeling of being in the Gorge," Romeyn says. "Working with limited colour has been a way to imbue my work with a sense of place and memory, while my choice of colour is often emotive and symbolic. I always knew the semi-arid environment of Mutawintji National Park would require its own palette, distinct from any work I'd made before."

### *In return*

Annika Romeyn

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14 May—1 June

### FEATURE

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